VERSE VARIOUS

CHARLES
FRANCIS
POTTER

initialed signed

CE/

VERSE VARIOUS

BY

CHARLES FRANCIS POTTER

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
CHRISTMAS, 1915

Charles Francis Potter

PS3531
O78
V47
1915
pxxx

0 922344

VERSE VARIOUS

BY

CHARLES FRANCIS POTTER

THIS small volume is published with the view of preserving some of the verse which the author has been writing during the last few years. Most of it has been printed in magazines, but several pieces make their first appearance here. Acknowledgements are due to The Watchman, The Christian Work, The Christian Register, The Century Co., The Bucknell Mirror, and L'Agenda.

CHARLES FRANCIS POTTER

Edmonton, Alberta,
Christmas, 1915.

P
C
V
1
f

I.

P:
O
V
F

CHRISTMAS GREETING

Peace on earth; to men, good-will;
Ever let the message sound
At this happy time until
Christmas' simple pleasures fill
Ev'ry home the whole earth round.

IMMANUEL

A Christmas Hymn

Tune—Christmas, C.M.

We thank thee, Lord, that thou hast led
  Us in the past so well,
That by thy hand we have been fed,
  Our God, Immanuel.

We thank thee thou art with us now
  In ev'ry good we try.
When we must toil with sweat of brow,
  We love to feel thee nigh.

And in the days that are to come,
  God bless the church we love,
Till thou at last shalt take us home
  To be with thee above.

Christmas, 1909.

A CALL TO PEACE

A Christmas Acrostic.

Come all ye Christians, ye heralds of God,
Hearty and clear sound the message abroad.
Raise with hosannas your voices on high
Into the farthest blue depths of the sky.
Shout till your joy sets the church-bells aring:
Tell of the message that Christmas should bring,—
Men-of-good-will must make PEACE here below:
Agents of war and destruction and woe
Soon will depart when good men bi[illegible] hem go.

A CHILD'S MORNING PRAYER

This morning, Father-God, I pray
That Thou wilt help me through the day
In all my work and all my play
In ev'rything I do or say
To act in just the kindest way.

A CHILD'S EVENING PRAYER

Father, keep me through the night
In the dark as in the light.
May all people ev'rywhere
Slumber in Thy loving care.
When the morning wakes again,
Keep me sweet all day. Amen.

STILL LEAD ME ON

Still lead me on;
There lie before me many ways:
Alike they greet my baffled gaze,
Oh God, lead on!

Still lead me on;
No chance hath led my steps aright,
But Thou, through darkest day and night,
Hast led me on.

Still lead me on;
I feel Thy presence with me now:
By wondrous ways, I know not how,
Thou dost lead on.

Still lead me on;
Since in the past I have been led,
The days to come I will not dread;
Thou wilt lead on.

Sept. 7, 1907.

LITTLE MADELINE

God loaned to us a rosebud sweet,
A flow'ret rare;
And in our care
The wee bud grew in our love's heat.

She made us think of heav'nly things,
Of God above,
His tender love,
And all the sweet peace that it brings.

But 'ere we knew how much we cared
For her dear ways,
To our amaze,
We found we'd lost what once we'd shared.

For, 'spite our pray'rs, some great strong Hand
Our rose-tree shook,
Our rose-bud took
From out our sight to some fair land.

And though we're blind by many a tear,
We thank the Power
Who took our flower
That He has left it's fragrance here.

1909.

MEASURELESS LOVE

So large, they say, the love
Of Him who rules above
To each a share may fall:
But, like the children here,
To earthly father dear,
Can each not have it all?

1907.

THE ACCEPTED TIME

Chances missed are lost forever:
Opportunities once past
Come again to meet us never:
Tempus Pater travels fast.
Lest remorse should be your neighbor,
When white hair is on your brow,
In this golden moment labor;
Heed the motto, "Do it now."

1911.

THE PAGE OF LIFE

"Life is a sheet of paper white
On which we each of us may write
A line or two, and then comes night,"
So runs the verse.

But while we each with each condole,
And waves of sadness round us roll,
Let this one thought our hearts console,
It might be worse.

Suppose the paper wasn't white;
Suppose we were required to write
A billion words or so, at sight,
Would that be better?

And then again I have opined,
It surely should relieve one's mind
To know the Addressee is kind
Who reads the letter.

October 1912.

THE NAME OF GOD

Of old, man knelt before a God whose name
Was Pow'r; who held the reins of heav'n and earth
In hand capricious. Then there came a time
When man gave God a court, called him The Just,
And bowed to "Eye for eye and tooth for tooth."
But God laid down the reins and gavel both
And sent his son to say that God is Love.

1909.

SUCCESS

To win success, what is it, pray?
Is man's work done when earth he leaves?
Did Christ look victor on that day
When on the cross between the thieves?

1909.

THE MEETING

His ship sailed east; my boat went west.
Each of us felt within his breast,
"His search is not like mine."
He for the truly human sought;
My quest had for its single thought,
The perfectly divine.

Years passed, I thought my search in vain
Until I met my friend again
And heard him say to me,
"We on the self-same errand ran:
In that he was a perfect man
Lay Christ's divinity."

1909.

THE VALUE OF OPPOSITION

Contention strengthens a notion.
  Oppression makes rebels strong.
When a hoop once is in motion,
  Smiting but helps it along.
Persecute whom you'd make hero:
  What one defends he holds dear.
Burned not the torches of Nero,
  Christ and His Word were not here.

THE VILLAGE CARPENTER

A sycamore stood by the door
  And when the sun was high,
The children played within its shade
  And watched the shavings fly.

The man within was tall and thin,
  But strong and full of grace;
His eyes would smile the livelong while
  And light a winsome face.

From year to year without a tear
  Those eyes shone bright with love,
And children thought their blue was brought
  From Heaven's dome above.

But one sad day they passed that way
  And saw their loving friend
With troubled eyes; and, in surprise,
  They sought his grief to end.

He dried the tear and calmed their fear
  And kissed each rosy cheek,
And said, "To-day I go away
  For many a long, long week."

They said, "No, no, why should'st thou go?
  Stay here beneath the tree."
"Oh, children dear, there is, I fear,
  Another tree for me."

"Who'll saw the oaks and make the yokes
And shape the farmer's plow?"
"Someone there'll be to work for thee,
But I must leave thee now."

"Alack! alack! Thou'lt ne'er come back:
Thy face we ne'er shall see."
He smiled and said, "Perhaps, instead,
Thou wilt come home to me.

"So do not grieve. If I must leave,
We'll love each other still,
And by and by thou'lt learn, as I,
It is the *Father's* will."

1913.

THE ANSWER

I looked for the message of Easter.
In thought, as my Bible I read,
I followed the sorrowing women,
That dawn when they went to their dead.

I asked them the message of Easter
As, wond'ring, they came from the cave.
They hurried away to the city,
And never an answer they gave.

Then toward me labored two runners;
I think they were Peter and John.
Their faces were haggard and anxious:
Before I could speak they were gone.

All day in the mystified city
I questioned again and again.
The news they all told, "He is risen,"
Ignoring my query, "What then?"

Two men from Emmaus I halted,
That night as they cityward sped.
They told me how they had seen Jesus,
That he was alive from the dead.

But when I still asked for the message,
What meant his defeat of the tomb,—
They said, "We must hasten." I followed
And came to a large upper room.

They would not allow me to enter:
    My ear I put close to the door.
Within, many persons were talking.
    I lingered, in hope to learn more.

But soon in their eager narrations
    There came, of a sudden, a pause.
Not one made a sound as I listened,
    And wondered what could be the cause.

And then came the real Easter message;
    At last my inquiring might cease;
For out of the questioning silence
    I heard a sweet voice saying, "PEACE!"

1906

THE CHILD ANGEL

Over the edge of the cloud I peep,
    Smiling at you below.
What is it, mother, that makes you weep:
    Why are you crying so?

Up in this new place I don't feel sick:
    Doctor won't come to-day.
Lift up your head, mother, look up quick.
    Listen to what I say.

Mother, I love you, dear. Loud I call;
    Tell you to look up high.
Somehow you don't seem to hear at all:
    Could if you wouldn't cry.

1911.

IT MUST BE FOR THE BEST

(An incident of the Franco-Prussian War.)

At last the dread conscription
Reached rustic St. Pierre:
The news, when read in chapel,
Made consternation there.

From fourteen up to sixty,
Each male to war must go.
France needed ev'ry musket
To fight the Prissian foe.

That night in saddened households
The fond good-byes were said;
And sounds of stifled sobbing
Came from the lately wed.

In one snug little cottage
Beside the village street,
The mother held her baby,
While, in a nearby seat.

A boy whose face seemed manly,
His years were ten and four,
Sat thinking of the future
And what it held in store.

His mother dropped her knitting
    And held his hand awhile:
He, though his heart was breaking,
    Yet tried to wear a smile.

"Don't worry, mother dearest.
    It must be for the best
That dad and I are drafted,
    And must go with the rest."

The words were said with effort,
    Then one big sob of grief.
Than tears, what else in sorrow
    Gives physical relief?

The mother soon was weeping
    And from the father's cheek
Was brushed a tear; they must not
    See him, the father, weak.

Full long they talked, till midnight
    Had burned the candle down,
And silence, deep and lonely,
    Had settled on the town.

* * * * * * * * * *

'Twas morning in the village.
    The men must march that day
And be before the nightfall
    A score of miles away.

The boy of fourteen summers
    Should bear the flag, they said,
And march beside his father,
    The drummer, at the head.

Of that small band of conscripts
    Who arm in arm, behind,
Went stumbling down the roadway,
    For tears had made them blind.

They reached the drummer's cottage.
    He paused, as did his son;
But said the stern, strange captain,
    "March on, you lazy one."

So for the son and father
    Was but one last long gaze.
That picture in the doorway
    Was with them many days,

That picture in the doorway,
    The mother and the child,
That mother, who, though anguished,
    Still choked the sob, and smiled.

* * * * * * * *

The men are placed for battle,
    All ready for the fight.
There, Prussians; here, the Frenchmen,
    Who've marched the whole long night.

All still; and then a rumble.
"The Prussians charge! Advance!"
And brave to meet the onset,
Rush on the sons of France.

'Way up among the front ranks
A Frenchman bravely drums.
He cheers the men; but at him
A burly Prussian comes.

He surely now will falter,
But no. Ah! Now, he's down!
And for the color-bearer
The Prussian, with a frown,

Is rushing. Heaven save him,
He's but a boy! And now
The Prussian sabre flashes
And mars that fair white brow.

The flag is seized: its bearer
Stops, staggers, falls, but see,
He rises, weak but dauntless,
And rests upon his knee.

The men of France are falt'ring.
They cannot hear the drum.
The sticks that should be beating
Are clasped in fingers numb.

But hark! In accents cheery
Above the din they rise,
Those drum-beats urging "Onward!"
Fears change to glad surprise;

For there in kneeling posture,
With all his might and main,
The drummer's son, the flag-boy,
Drums "Charge!" and "Charge!" again.

With three cheers for the drummer,
The Frenchmen charge the foe,
And from them flee the Prussians
Like leaves when fierce winds blow.

And now the fight is over;
For France 'tis victory:
But where is he who gained it?
Yes, where, indeed, is he?

Still faintly beating "Onward!"
Close by his father's side,
All bloody, weak, and gasping,
The drummer's son had died.

The wounded father told them,
While in the surgeon's tent,
Told how his boy had kissed him;
How, just before he went,

He talked of home, and mother,
    The baby, and the rest;
How tender his last words were,
    "It must be for the best."

1899.

II.

THE BLUSH

I stand in awe before her love for me:
It is a mighty, elemental thing.
It permeates her ev'ry little move
When I am near. A woman's stern reserve
Bids her deny it and her feelings hide,
But yet in vain. The bounding, leaping tide
O'erflows the dikes by man and time built up;
Red-torrented heart's blood it pours, and near
Breaks through the tender skin of face and throat
Where crimson glows the happy, bashful flush.

1905.

THE QUATRAIN

Along this creek one finds in spring
The sweet arbutus where it trails;
Or, if his search for flowers fails,
He hears the sweetest song-birds sing

1906, Lewisburg, Pa.

ABSENCE

Parting gives pain; yet at parting
Warm lips make the anguish less keen:
But what can allay the heart's smarting
When far-stretching miles intervene?

THE BENT SPRUCE

Beside the Skatchewanna's rapid flow,
  Against a bluff cut steep in ages past,
There grew a small spruce sapling, hugging close,
  Well sheltered in his niche from stormy blast.

Content he grew for half a decade there,
  As straight as any sapling in the vale;
Then bolder felt, and thought himself so strong
  That he no longer need beware the gale.

Relying on his vigor and his strength,
  He bent his tip and from the cliff inclined:
He boldly reached out where the breezes blew,
  And proudly scorned the niche he left behind.

One summer, two, and three, alone he grew,
  And wondered he had been content so long
To stay where freedom was a thing unknown.
  "I need no help," said he, "for I am strong."

Full early flew the south-bound birds that fall:
  The thick-furred fox down deeper dug his den.
With winter came fierce storms that shook the spruce
  And wrenched his sturdy limbs away. And when

The spring came back, with birds and buds and warmth
And floods that swelled the yellow waters high,
The spruce again his needled tip bent back
And gladly found the shielding wall was nigh.

The sapling grew for years, and still it grows
Where winds the stream through broad Alberta's land;
No sapling now, a tree with great bowed trunk,
As if it had been bent by Cyclop's hand.

OLD MAN MOUNTAIN

Prone upon Colin's mighty range,
  Thy giant face hath scanned the sky
A million years without a change,
  A million years with steadfast eye.

The Athabaska's yellow stream
  Is ages old to such as we;
And yet its primal rush must seem
  A thing of yesterday to thee.

What hast thou seen, oh mighty friend,
  Within the ages that are gone,
The countless times that heaven's bend
  Hath brightened with the rosy dawn?

How many years did Nature take
  In chiselling the gorge Maligne?
The liquid opal, Edith's lake,
  Whence came its iridescent sheen?

What wilt thou see, oh silent one,
  Within the centuries to be,
When moon and star and shining sun
  Shall whisper secrets new to thee?

Jasper Park, 1915.

III.

HELEN THE GREAT

There was a young Helen of Troy
Whose sweet tooth no candy could cloy:
She ate, and she ate,
Till, sad to relate,
She's Helen of Avoirdupois!

PETER THE PROUD

We have a bright kitten named Pete
Whose cleverness cannot be bete:
He cut up a caper
Upon some fly-paper
And now is stuck up at the fete.

MR. ARTHUR DOX'S CLOSED SUNDAY

Now this man Arthur Dox, Esquire, was very, very "good."
That is, he quite refused at times to do the things he should,
For fear that in the doing so he might be led to sin,
And when he reached the pearly gates they might not let him in.

His very special hobby was the Holy Sabbath Day.
He stood for its observance in the strictest sort of way:
His children dared not whistle and his roosters feared to crow
And Sundays in his garden patch his turnips dassent grow!

The neighbors' Sabbath "goings-on" moved Dox with holy pity;
He soon felt called to elevate the morals of his city.
He claimed that Sunday work of any kind "should not be did,"
That on that day there should descend the tightest kind of lid.

The days of miracles are gone, but, passing strange to say,
The very thing he prayed for came to pass one Sabbath day.
When Dox came down to breakfast, to eat, as he supposed,
A friend called up by telephone and said, "This Sunday's closed!"

"Hurrah," cried Dox, "the right has won, and now I'll break my fast."
He waited long for his oatmeal, and called the maid at last.
She did not come, and in the kitchen cold he found a letter,
"Dear Sir," it said, "this kitchen's closed. I hope you like it better."

"Oh well," he said, while foraging for grub upon the shelf,
"It's not so bad; I'll hurry round and get some food myself."
But when he looked for milk and cream, his breast in wrath he smote,
For all there was upon the step was just another note.

"Dear Sir,' it said, "we're sorry, but the law is strict and straight:
On Sunday's now no milk we leave at anybody's gate."
Dox shut the door, and I don't know but what it was a slam,
And said a word below his breath that sounded like a damn.

A grouchy Mr. Dox it was who started off to church;
And once again he found himself most sadly in the lurch:
The trolley-cars were late, in fact they didn't come at all,
So Dox was forced to hoof it to his sacred meeting-hall.

The audience was on the steps; a note was on the door.
The janitor was sorry, but he "couldn't work no more."
The officers had told him that if they ever saw
Him working on the Sabbath they would sure enforce the law.

But someone broke a window, which must have
been a sin,
And went around inside and let the freezing people
in.
The minister began to preach, and to his flock he
told
Of "Hell and Sure Damnation," and they didn't
feel so cold.

Before he fair was started, though, in quite
dramatic style
An officer in uniform came down the center aisle
And said in tones of thunder in the stillness of the
kirk,
"By order of the king, desist, for this is surely
work."

As with the others Dox, our friend, went slowly
out the door,
Much meeker and much wiser than he ever was
before,
He thought he fell upon the step and sadly bumped
his head;
But waked and found his nightmare wild had
kicked him out of bed.

1914.

WITHOUT A CHAPERON

She went one day to college
  Did Miss Sophia Stone
With quantities of baggage, but
  Without a chaperon.

Her age was—over twenty:
  She thought herself quite grown:
She didn't know she couldn't go
  Without a chaperon.

One day she went out walking.
  She started out alone
But met a friend and walked with him
  Without a chaperon.

The matron heard about it,
  And "sat on" Sophy Stone
For walking with a horrid man
  Without a chaperon.

Poor Sophy cried and ran to
  The room she called her own,
And vowed that never would she go
  Without a chaperon.

That night the "Sem" was burning:
  The flames on Sophy shone:
She thought she'd reached the other place
  Without a chaperon.

Page Fortu-tou

A youth climbed through the window
  To save Miss Sophy Stone.
"Kind sir," she said, "I dare not go
  Without a chaperon."

In vain he tried to save her;
  She could but shriek and moan,
And so they died together there
  Without a chaperon!

EXITS

They "kick the bucket" when they die
From football injuries at Yale:
They're not so rude at Harvard, but
Politely "pass beyond the pale."

A SUBURBANITE'S HEAVEN

I would not take my "chamber in the silent halls of death,"
When life upon this earth for me shall cease;
I'd like to go on whistling when I catch my second breath,
And raise a little garden-stuff upon the Plains of Peace.

Printed by
Edmonton Printing & Publishing
Co. Limited